

September 21, 2003

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to ask that the Element-1 CW requirement for HF Operation NOT be removed, despite the fact that some other countries seem to be making this mistake by removing this requirement from their exam process. As an Extra Class operator and a licensee for 30-years, I have already seen way too much degradation in the testing system used in the United States. When I became licensed in the early 1970's, in order to gain a license, you didn't just memorize a question pool you learned the material! There were no question pools, only electronic theory to master. If you knew the material, it did not matter what questions the FCC would ask, you would be able to answer them. As a current Volunteer Examiner for the ARRL and W5YI Groups, I have been able to get a good feel for the caliber of applicants all of the new relaxed rules are bringing to our service, and the outlook is NOT good. Is the purpose to allow just anyone to get a license, or to have trained people who know how to operate properly on the air? Everyone seems to forget that Amateur Radio is not just a hobby; it's a public service that is supposed to be viable in times of emergency. If I were not licensed and needed to rely on emergency communications today from the amateur radio community, I might be in real trouble when it comes to newly licensed operators. Not because they are new, but because they are not being trained properly and prepared properly.

If the current decline in standards continues, the FCC might just as well close down monitoring stations, and not worry about conduct on the air, because you would be helping to promote it. Why does it seem so many standards are being altered today just for convenience? If an individual wants to be an operator with HF privileges, then let him or her work for it, and not just walk into a test session ready to spout off memorized answers. The same goes for the CW test. I never could understand why for the longest time if an applicant did not copy 1 minute solid, they were given a multiple choice test. How would that work under actual conditions where a CW signal with urgency had to be copied? Would you ask the sender to give you a multiple choice test because that's the only way his message might be interpreted?

The United States needs standards and TRAINED operators. I really do not care about numbers of operators; I would rather see dedicated individuals who showed the initiative to become well trained and efficient. KEEPING the CW requirement will help to keep this country strong by allowing only the most dedicated to lead by example. Unfortunately, the US is already way behind in such things as Education of our future leaders, efficient fuel production, manufacturing, technology and the like. For those reasons, I not only urge the FCC to NOT drop the CW requirement, but to also reinstate to previous CW testing system requiring a 20 WPM test for all Extra Class Operators. CW is far from dead! The bands are extremely active with this mode. Give a listen on the

lower 25 of any band and see if that is not true. Lets vote for trained operators,  
lets vote to keep CW!

Sincerely,

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